

ART IN AMERICA

AN ILLUSTRATED ART MAGAZINE
PUBLISHED FEBRUARY, APRIL,
OCTOBER AND DECEMBER

VOLUME THIRTY-EIGHT

EDITED BY
JEAN LIPMAN



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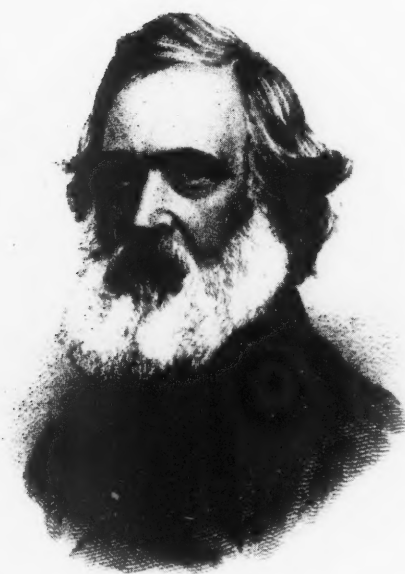
Art in America

FINE ARTS

FEBRUARY • 1950

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FEB - 7 1950



B. F. Mason

Two Journeyman Painters

By Alfred Frankenstein and Arthur K. D. Healy

AMERICAN LANDSCAPES

Fine Oils By

BIRCH
CHAMBERS
CHURCH
COLE
CROPSEY
CULVERHOUSE
DURAND
HEADE
HENRY
HUNTINGTON
INNESS
KENSETT
WHITTREDGE



"Passaic Falls, N. J." One of the earliest American landscapes—
fine oil on canvas 28" by 36", circa 1810.
Artist as yet unidentified.

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FEBRUARY 1950

NUMBER 1

Two Journeyman Painters

By Alfred Frankenstein and Arthur K. D. Healy

Benjamin Franklin Mason 7

Abraham G. D. Tuthill 47

With the cooperation of Mrs. Charles M. Swift,
the Sheldon Museum and Middlebury College of
Middlebury, Vermont.



COVER ILLUSTRATION

Artist Unknown: Portrait of B. F. Mason

From *New England Genealogical Register and Antiquarian Journal*,
Vol. XXVI, No. 3; July, 1872

EDITORIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Beginning with the current issue, *ART IN AMERICA* will be devoted each year to four special publications in the field of American art research, some in conjunction with coordinated exhibitions. These issues will appear in February, April, October, and December. A group of institutions, including the Worcester Art Museum, Middlebury College, Amherst College, the New York State Historical Association, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, Yale University, the Albany Institute of History and Art, the Wadsworth Atheneum, the Corcoran Gallery, the Brooklyn Museum, the Addison Gallery of American Art, the William Rockhill Nelson Gallery of Art, and the City Art Museum of St. Louis, have signified their interest in collaborating on this project over a period of years, and we are indeed grateful for their interest and encouragement.

We take pleasure at this time in announcing our plans for 1950. This February issue on *Two Journeyman Painters* by Alfred Frankenstein and Arthur K. D. Healy has been carried out with the cooperation of Mrs. Charles M. Swift, the Sheldon Museum and Middlebury College of Middlebury, Vermont. The April issue will be devoted to the collections of Fennimore House in Cooperstown, and will consist of a series of articles by leading authorities on the various aspects of the museum collections. This issue will be edited by Dr. Louis C. Jones, Director of the New York State Historical Association, which is collaborating in the publication. The October issue will be the first book-length monograph on the Quaker preacher and painter, Edward Hicks, and will include chapters by Edith Gregor Halpert, Arthur Edwin Bye, Julius Held, and Dorothy C. Miller. The December issue, published under the auspices of the Amherst College art department, will be titled *Benjamin West, His Times and His Influence*. — J. L.

THE AUTHORS

ARTHUR K. D. HEALY — Art Department, Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont.

ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN — Music and art critic of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, at present preparing a book on William Harnett and his school.

ART IN AMERICA

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FOREWORD

THIS study is the outcome of an accident that was three years in the happening. In August, 1946, it was my privilege to go to Middlebury College to attend the first session of its annual Composers' Conference. On the day I arrived I went to the Bank of Middlebury to cash a check, and there I beheld an extremely handsome portrait on the wall. The tellers informed me that this was a portrait of General William Nash, founder of the bank, and that it was the work of "old Mr. Mason." Information about "old Mr. Mason," they said, could be obtained down the street at the Sheldon Museum.

The Sheldon Museum, it developed, possessed several portraits ascribed to one Benjamin Franklin Mason, but for facts concerning this artist I was referred still farther down the street to the home of Mr. Healy. Mr. Healy's home contains two portraits by Mason. What is much more important, it also contains Mr. Healy, who was in a mood to indulge the whims of a wandering stranger interested in the work of an unknown artist.

For two weeks Arthur Healy and I circulated around Middlebury and adjacent towns looking for Masons, which we found in abundance. At the end of that time I returned to San Francisco, confident that we should be able to turn out a report of our findings long before we sat down to our Christmas dinners. But the present note is being written more than three years later, after we had agreed to terminate our work not because the research was finished but simply because we did not wish it to drag on forever.

Our study of Mason sprouted an appendix, the article on Tuthill published herewith. It has taken us into almost every corner of Vermont, and to Boston, New York, Buffalo, Chicago, and many parts of California. It has involved us in long and searching correspondence with poets in Texas, physicians in New Hampshire, and ministers of the gospel in Wisconsin, and with more librarians, curators, and directors of historical societies than we can list or whose help we can acknowledge. To all of these, and to the innumerable private owners of paintings who have permitted

us to study and photograph their artistic heirlooms, our deepest thanks are due. Perhaps the best result of all our work is the endless series of friendships, it has brought us.

We must, however, make special acknowledgment to Mrs. Charles M. Swift, the Sheldon Museum and Middlebury College. Without their generous assistance, this research could not have been carried on or these articles published.

—ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN MASON

Vermonter



Fig. 1. B. F. Mason: The Bugbee Family, 1826
1750 House, Sheffield, Mass.

Benjamin Franklin Mason

Vermonter

FOR forty-five years, across the heart of the nineteenth century, Benjamin Franklin Mason traveled the railroads and highways of New England and upstate New York, remaining briefly or extensively in this town and that, painting portraits of merchants, lawyers, professors, preachers, their wives and their progeny. He ranged from Boston on the east to Sheboygan, Wisconsin, on the west, and sojourned for long periods in Buffalo and Troy, but most of his work was accomplished in his native state of Vermont. Hundreds of his paintings still adorn the homes in which they were originally hung, and many more have gone, with their original owners or inheritors, to places as distant as California, where we have located no less than fourteen paintings by this artist. In sum, these pictures constitute not only a remarkably vivid and lively record of New England people, but also a synoptic history of nineteenth century American portrait painting from the era of the primitive itinerants to that of the photographic realists struggling in competition with the camera which was shortly to destroy their profession.

That Mason and other artists of his time and place have been neglected by the scholars is not surprising. The portrait painters of New England in the nineteenth century were appallingly numerous and appallingly prolific; their works, largely in private hands and scattered through countless small towns, are difficult to get at; information about them is scarce and reliable information even scarcer; and since their main purpose in life was to achieve likenesses pleasing to their sitters, few of them developed markedly individual stylistic traits. Consequently historians of American art have fought shy of the whole field, with the result that some New England portraitists of exceptional ability and distinction have been by-passed in the books.

One such artist is Benjamin Franklin Mason. Placing him alongside his better known contemporaries — Chester Harding, Francis Alexander, Henry Inman — another reason for his obscurity suggests itself. Mason painted few celebrities, and those he did paint — men like the Albany wit, John Godfrey Saxe, and the Vermont Chief Justice and Governor, Charles K. Williams — have failed to retain their celebrity except in limited circles. Artists are supposed to confer fame on their sitters, and they

often do, but it is surprising what a *Daniel Webster*, a *Charles Dickens* or a *Lord Macaulay* can do for the reputation of an American painter. Mason never rose to such heights of grandeur. He confined himself, or was confined, largely to citizens of small-town New England, painting them with a curious mixture of gentleness and austerity, and with more than a touch of shrewdly applied sentiment when it came to the children. His world is mid-century Vermont in its Sunday best, but it is none the less candid, autochthonous and authentic for all that.

Barring a show organized by one of the writers (Healy), Mason has been, to the best of our knowledge and belief, represented in only two public exhibitions — held 105 years apart — and each time with a single picture. Except for the catalogues of these three exhibitions,^{1,2,3} and three single-line entries in check-lists of American painters,^{4,5,6} the only reference to Mason in the published literature on art is in a brief magazine article which appeared thirteen years ago.⁷ He is also briefly treated in Charles K. Bolton's unpublished manuscript,⁸ which we were most courteously permitted to consult.

References to Mason in literature other than that of his profession are not infrequent. One can trace him in genealogies,⁹ town histories,^{10,11} Vermont historical publications,^{12,13,14} and letters to the editors of newspapers.^{15,16} Most of these notices are of some value, but far and away the most important Mason document is the memoir by Philip Battell of Middlebury, Vermont, read before the Middlebury Historical Society on January 30, 1871, two weeks after Mason died. Unfortunately the original manuscript of this paper is lost, but an extensive abstract of it was published,¹⁷ and this version is clearly the source of many of the above-mentioned references. Battell made some mistakes and was apparently not informed about some aspects of Mason's career; nevertheless he is the only half-way reliable authority on the artist's life, and all the facts and all the direct quotations in the biographical sketch which follows are taken from him unless otherwise credited.

II

Benjamin Franklin Mason was born in the village of Pomfret, Vermont, on March 31, 1804. He was the seventh of the ten children of a farmer named Marshall Mason, and he might easily have followed his father's calling if he had not, at the age of nine, been stricken with "necrosis of the lower part of one of his legs." This illness, which today would prob-

ably be called infantile paralysis, left him a cripple for the rest of his life. Perhaps because of it, he never married; in the reminiscences of him preserved by some of the families among whom he lived in later years his frequent moody streaks and irascibility are invariably ascribed to his physical disabilities; and his crippled condition may have had a direct effect on his painting in at least one particular, to be considered later.

At all events, he was apparently confined to his home for a number of years during his childhood, and he whiled away his time drawing and painting, copying pictures from books, and sharing his discoveries with Tom Ware, a Pomfret boy who was a few years older than Mason himself. Later, when he went to the village school, the school-mistress took an interest in his talents, and this led to an episode which reads like something out of Sherwood Anderson, even in Battell's copper-plate prose:

"At fourteen the grateful boy proposed to his teacher to paint her portrait, as a recompense for the facility she had furnished him. She was handsome and intelligent, he bashful and young. But in painting he was her master, and his method was his own. She was to sit where he could see her face reflected in a glass. And so the work was duly done, approved by the sitter and pronounced a likeness when finished."

Meanwhile Tom Ware had begun to take lessons from an itinerant painter who had relatives in Pomfret and often came to visit them. What Ware learned he passed on as best he could to Mason; perhaps Mason was prevented by parental opposition and the state of his health from studying directly with this man, but in view of the free and easy methods of instruction that prevailed among American painters at that time, Ware's teacher may also be regarded as the first instructor of our artist, even if his instruction seeped through at second hand.

Battell calls this master-at-one remove Abram Tuttle, and his name appears in this form in one of the two signed works of his which we have found; but he is most commonly called Abraham G. D. Tuthill. Although he was a painter of some celebrity in his time, he is more obscure today than Mason himself. He had studied with Benjamin West in London and with various masters in Paris, but his work reveals little European influence except in its strongly Italianate color tonality. It is forthright and honest, and was an excellent model for Mason and Ware to have followed. Tuthill painted not only portraits but historical and religious subjects as well, and his achievement, so far as we have been able to track it down, is so interesting that we have prepared a separate article concerning him. We have so far located about forty works of Tuthill. Of Ware we have located nothing. Ware died at the age of 23,¹¹ and so his career cannot have proceeded very far.



Fig. 2. Joseph Greenleaf Cole: Captain Barnabas Bartol, 1826

Mrs. H. G. Bartol, New York
 (Photograph courtesy Frick Art Reference Library)

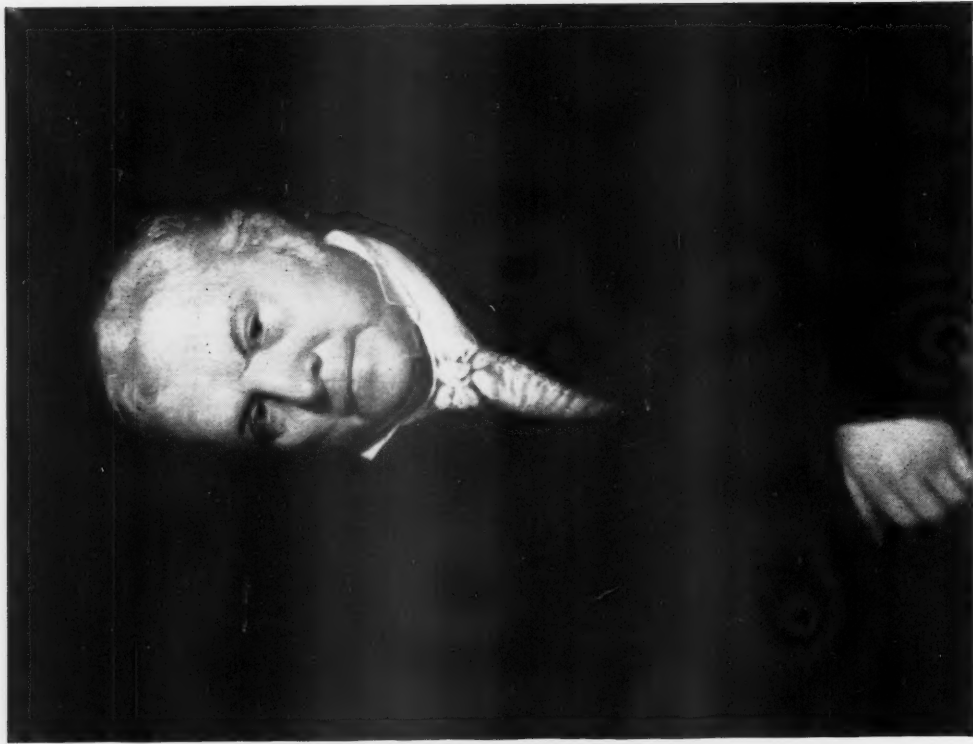


Fig. 3. Joseph Greenleaf Cole: Clement Storer, 1829

Mrs. J. D. Wright, Chestnut Hill, Pa.
 (Photograph courtesy Frick Art Reference Library)

According to Battell, Mason painted his first oil, a portrait of his father, at the age of 16. This picture was later destroyed, but a signed portrait of the artist's sister, Harriet, which must date from about the same time or a little later, is preserved at 1750 House in Sheffield, Massachusetts. It is in the hard, liney, monumental style typical of the primitive New England limners, with an oval of head joined by a long neck to an almost perfect sphere intended to suggest the upper part of the body. It took Mason many years before he mastered the anatomy of the human torso, but even in this earliest of his known pictures there is a hint of the startling realism in the rendition of faces and the personalities behind them which is one of the major attractions of his later work.

At 17 (1821) Mason taught a country school in Rochester, Vermont, and in the following year he attended the young men's academy at Randolph, where, in all probability, he met Samuel Belknap Ormsbee, whose portrait he painted shortly afterward, and who, many years later, befriended him when he was down on his luck. Mason's career as an itinerant began about 1825, when, according to Battell, he worked in various small towns in Vermont and New Hampshire, including his native town of Pomfret.

One of the Pomfret pictures of this period, the group portrait of Adin Bugbee and his family (Fig. 1), is also preserved at 1750 House and was exhibited at the Carnegie Institute in 1941. In this work, signed, and dated November, 1826, Mason's mastery of facial individuality has markedly progressed, but many primitive devices still remain, notably the obvious difference in scale between Mr. Bugbee and his wife (who, by the way, was probably Mason's aunt), even though they are enclosed in the same frame or "box." The solution to the problem of arranging and relating figures in a group which Mason achieves in this work has the same Gordian-knot quality of genius as his solution to the problem of painting hands.

To this same era belongs the small, appealing portrait of Samuel Belknap Ormsbee, dated 1828 by an inscription on the back added thirty-eight years later by a member of the Ormsbee family. This delicate work, almost miniaturistic for all its lininess and problematical anatomy, is painted on a hand-made roofing shingle of Vermont pine.

III

"In January, 1831, he (Mason) met in Burlington J. G. Cole, of Newburyport, Massachusetts, a true artist, who told him all he knew. Of him he gained a knowledge of methods unattainable before, worked under



Fig. 4. B. F. Mason: Mrs. Lebdeus Harris, c. 1831
Sheldon Museum, Middlebury, Vt.



Fig. 5. B. F. Mason: Mrs. Philip Battell, c. 1831
Mrs. Charles Swift, Middlebury, Vt.

his eye, and under this influence came first to Middlebury in May." So states Battell.

That Joseph Greenleaf Cole of Newburyport could "tell Mason all he knew" in about four months' time is not cause for amazement, although it must be admitted that Cole's work has not been thoroughly studied, and he may actually have been an artist of greater ability than is indicated by the photographs of his paintings preserved at the Frick Art Reference Library. To judge from these, and from the few Coles reproduced by Clara Endicott Sears,¹⁸ the main thing he had to teach Mason was assurance, size and boldness of attack. He was only a year older than Mason himself,¹⁹ but he had the advantage of an artistic background. His father, originally known as Jacques Moyse Dupré, was a Frenchman who, for reasons unknown, changed his name to Moses D. Cole shortly after he settled in Newburyport in 1795. Moses D. Cole painted portraits of sea captains in a crude, primitive style, and his son followed in the same tradition at the beginning of his career. Joseph Greenleaf Cole's portrait of Captain Barnabas Bartol (Fig. 2), dated 1826, is typical; it is a lusty, vigorous affair, far larger in conception and more virile in manner than anything Mason had attempted up to that time. But J. G. Cole's *Clement Storer* (Fig. 3), with its head isolated by the fall of the light and its generalized handling of the deeply shadowed body, shows that by 1829 this artist had made his own rough-and-ready adaptation of the Stuart formula, while his *Asa Freeman* exhibits something of the same plasticity that is characteristic of Mason in the 1830's and 40's. Cole's later career — he died in 1858 — parallels Mason's in that he, too, fought the photographers by imitating them, to the complete ruin of his art. In general he is bluff and blunt; at no period of his work does he exhibit the delicacy, the psychological penetration or the sympathy with varied types of human beings that appear in the best works of his pupil.

Battell accounts for no formative influences on Mason's career other than those of Tuthill and Cole. We should like, in a purely speculative way, to suggest one more.

There were close ties between Connecticut and Vermont in the pioneer period of the latter state, as is shown by such Vermont place names as New Haven, Waterbury, Woodstock, Pomfret and Middlebury; it is not surprising, therefore, that works of eighteenth century Connecticut artists can be found in the Green Mountain area. According to William Sawitzky,²⁰ Ralph Earl was in Bennington in 1798, and it is not impossible that he may have been in Vermont at other times, too. It seems likely that



Fig. 6. B. F. Mason: Mrs. Halsey Wing, 1832
Mrs. *Angela Wing* Roth, Sacramento, Cal.



Fig. 7. B. F. Mason: Halsey Wing, 1832
Mrs. *Angela Wing* Roth, Sacramento, Cal.

Benjamin Franklin Mason, in his wanderings about his native state, came into contact with works of this master, for there is a strong suggestion of his manner in some of Mason's portraits of the early 1830's, notably the elegant, tubularly beautiful young women, like Mrs. Halsey Wing (Fig. 6), Mrs. Harvey Bell and Mrs. Philip Battell (Fig. 5). Furthermore, the house seen through the window in the portrait of Mrs. Battell is that lady's own residence. This is, of course, a characteristic Ralph Earl device.

In the course of our research on Mason we have, as a matter of fact, run across some hitherto unnoticed evidence of artistic connections between Connecticut and Vermont which is well worth presenting in a kind of parenthetical way.

At Middlebury College and in the Sheldon Museum at Middlebury are three unsigned portraits representing Gamaliel Painter, one of the pioneers of that town, his second wife, and his daughter, Abby Victoria. Judge Painter was born in Connecticut in 1742 and his daughter in Middlebury in 1796;²¹ to judge from the apparent age of the sitters, all three pictures must have been done about 1800. All three are ascribed to one Ralph Rogers, concerning whom we have not been able to locate any information whatever, although the Sheldon Museum label states on no basis other than tradition, that he was the son of another artist, also named Ralph Rogers, who painted a portrait of Timothy Dwight, the famous president of Yale.

The portraits of Gamaliel Painter and his wife bear far more than a casual or accidental resemblance to the work of the somewhat mysterious Connecticut painters, William Jennys and J. William Jennys. The portrait of the child, in size, in color, in the treatment of the figure and its placement in a landscape with a distant view of a town, suggests, rather, the manner of Ralph Earl.

John Marshall Phillips of Yale informs us that Timothy Dwight is known to have sat for his portrait only twice in his life, the first time to Earl and the second time to John Trumbull. It is very likely, therefore, that the Sheldon Museum tradition has a grain of truth in it — that the portrait of Abby Victoria Painter is, in other words, by Ralph Earl or his identically named son, and that, over the years, the name Ralph Earl was distorted into Ralph Rogers.

Abby Painter was born in 1796, and seems, in her portrait, to be at least six years of age. This would place the portrait one year after the death of the elder Earl. Furthermore Sawitzky finds that the last works of the elder Earl are so different from the earlier, and so poor in quality,



Fig. 8. B. F. Mason: Judge Samuel Prescott Phillips Fay, c. 1834
Masonic Temple, Boston



Fig. 9. B. F. Mason: Mrs. Samuel P. P. Fay, c. 1834
Mrs. John Cook, Hartford, Conn.

as to be unrecognizable except on the basis of external documents, and this picture is definitely not in that category. It seems safer, therefore, to ascribe it to the younger Earl, who began his career in a manner much like that of his father's best period. The date commonly given for the birth of Ralph Earl, Jr. is 1784, but the Frick Art Reference Library has manuscript material of Theodore Bolton's which places that event in 1777. If he did paint the portrait of Abby Painter, the earlier date is probably correct.

IV

When Mason came to Middlebury in 1831, after his period of study with Cole, he inserted the following advertisement in the *Middlebury Register*:

"B. F. MASON
Portrait Painter

Would inform the inhabitants of Middlebury and vicinity that he intends remaining in town a few weeks, and respectfully solicits their patronage.

"His room is at the Vermont Hotel, where Ladies and Gentlemen are invited to call and examine specimens of his Painting."

This advertisement ran first on July 27, 1831, and was published again in September. According to Battell, Mason remained in Middlebury fifteen or sixteen months and painted some twenty portraits. Battell gives the name of only one of his sitters, however — a gentleman named Nelson Rogers — and Mason's picture of him seems to have disappeared. But we assign to this visit of 1831-32 six of the known works — Mrs. Lebdeus Harris (Fig. 4), Mr. and Mrs. Harvey Bell, Mrs. Philip Battell (Fig. 5), Dr. John Hough and Daniel Roberts. Mason's portrait of Halsey Wing (Fig. 7) is specifically dated 1832 and the picture of his wife (Fig. 6) was unquestionably painted at the same time, but these were probably done in Montpelier rather than in Middlebury.

In all of these portraits the linear method of modeling fuses with tonal methods learned from Cole and, probably, from the example of Earl. There are still some obvious *gaucheries* in the handling of the anatomy of the torso, as there are in Cole and Earl as well, and the manner in which the faces of Mrs. Harris and Dr. Hough seem almost literally to spring forward into relief above flat-patterned bodies still suggests the primitive. But the figures are all strikingly well placed in the picture-space; except



Fig. 10. B. F. Mason: Chief Justice Charles K. Williams, 1846
Vermont State Capitol, Montpelier

for the two sitters noted, all the subjects are completely palpable, solidly achieved entities; clothing and other accessories are handled with great richness, and, in the case of Mrs. Harris, with a mastery of fluent abstract design that is to recur repeatedly in Mason's work. Personality is deftly but powerfully suggested; and, although Mrs. Harris finds no reason to show her hands, the others, unlike Harriet Mason, the Bugbees, and Samuel Belknap Ormsbee, are under no compulsion to hide them.

The flesh tones in these early pictures have obviously changed with time. The ruddy and coppery tints of Mr. Bell, Mr. Wing and Dr. Hough, and the greenish shadow along the jaws of Mrs. Wing and Mrs. Battell, are distortions due to the passing of a century and more since these works were created.

Mason was to return to Middlebury many times, and his achievements and connections in that town loom large in the total picture. His biographer, Battell, was a Middlebury man and wrote his sketch of Mason for the Middlebury Historical Society, naturally emphasizing what he had done there. Add to this the fact that this research began in Middlebury, that one of the writers (Healy) is professor of art at Middlebury College and was able, through long-established personal friendships, to discover all the works of Mason that remain in the town, and additional reasons become apparent for seeing this artist against a Middlebury background.

At the conclusion of his first Middlebury visit, Mason went to the nearby town of Vergennes. "It was the cholera year. His errand was to take the lineaments of a lovely youth who had perished as was thought by cholera, and the dread of the community was in strange contrast with the devotion of family love and the reverence of genius for the immunity of art." Despite this macabre episode, Mason "mingled in the enjoyments of society there . . . They were gay times, he sometimes said, and he was of the gayest." During these years (1832-34) he also made quick trips to Montpelier, where, as observed above, the Wing portraits were probably painted, and to Woodstock, which was eventually to become his permanent home.

"From Vergennes the artist went to Rutland in 1834 and painted all summer." (In all probability, the extant portraits of Thomas Jolls Ormsbee, brother of Samuel Belknap Ormsbee, and his wife, were done in Rutland at this time.) "Friends here from Boston advised him to go there." (i. e., to Boston.) "Rev. Mr. Fay of Vergennes gave him a letter to Judge Fay of Cambridge, Massachusetts, his brother,* and in the fall he went. He

* Judge Fay of Cambridge was actually the father, not the brother of the Reverend Doctor Fay of Vergennes.



Fig. 11. Ezra Ames: Governor George Clinton
New York State Capitol, Albany

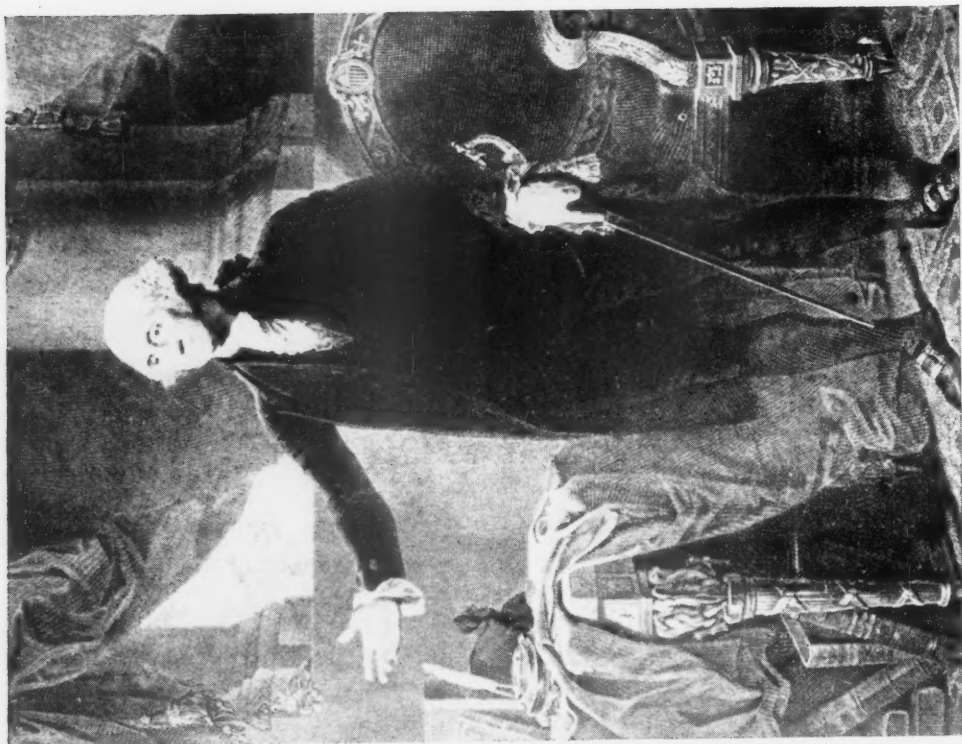


Fig. 12. James Heath, after Gilbert Stuart: George Washington
From Gustavus Eisen: Portraits of Washington

painted a portrait of Judge Fay, took a letter from him to Harding, and was introduced by Mrs. Fay to Alexander. The latter was full of cordial courtesy. He made the acquaintance of Franklin Dexter, the distinguished lawyer, who was a painter by choice and painted every day. He was introduced to Allston, and found him the kindest of all. He met one day, at Allston's studio, Jeremiah Mason, the chief among lawyers, and endowed with all the senses needful for an amateur in painting. Judge Fay continued his friendship, introduced him to collections as well as artists. He painted at his house a Miss Lamar, a Southern lass. He had other work, but the conclusion of his judgment was to go out again for practice and make himself a painter."

This paragraph is one of the meatiest and most interesting in Battell's memoir. It is confirmed by the fact that Mason exhibited in the tenth annual exhibition of the Boston Athenaeum in 1836, showing a "Portrait of a Lady" owned by one S. Hunt of Boston which we have not been able to locate. His portrait of Judge Samuel Prescott Phillips Fay (Fig. 8) hangs today in the Masonic Temple in Boston and is much the most distinguished of the numerous portraits in that building. It is full of *Sturm und Drang*; it is entirely tonal in its manner; it exploits strong contrasts of light and dark in a fashion often employed by Francis Alexander; and the relative isolation of the head, the luminously painted white shirt front, and the lack of detailed emphasis in the delineation of the body, all show the Stuart influence from which no painter working in Boston in the 1830's could possibly escape.

A man named Crosby Miller, who had been a boyhood friend of Mason, contributed a paragraph of very hazy reminiscence to Dana's *History of Woodstock*¹⁰ in which he stated that Mason had studied in Boston with an unnamed "portrait painter of note"; this has led other writers, like Huntley⁷ and Saxe,¹⁶ to speculate on the possibility that Mason may have studied with Gilbert Stuart or with one of his pupils, while Miss Huntley's guess that he may have attended the Stuart memorial exhibition of 1828 is transformed into a statement of fact by Miss Saxe. There is, however, no evidence that Mason ever visited Boston before 1834, and the nature of his work up to that year clearly rules out any possibility of contact with the work or the manner of Stuart during that artist's lifetime. Mason simply absorbed the Stuart tradition in its later, more romanticized form, from such Bostonians as Allston, Alexander and Harding, and it remained with him by fits and streaks for many years. It is most obvious in the portrait of Judge Fay, but it is not apparent at all in the portrait of

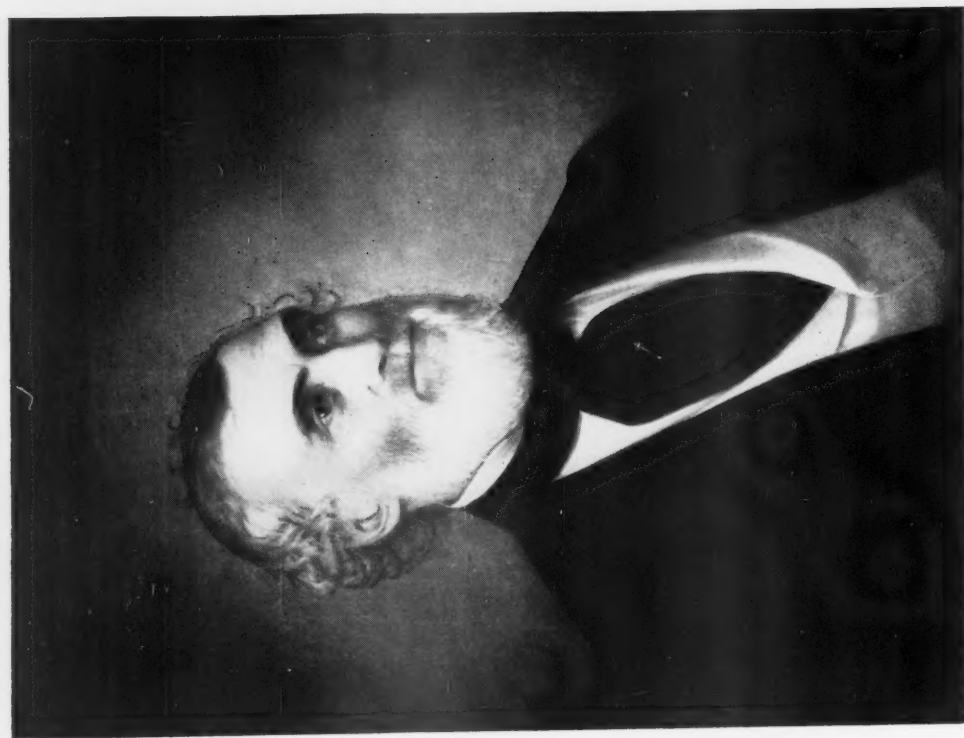


Fig. 13. B. F. Mason: Simeon Rockwell, 1867
Mrs. Allen Nelson, Middlebury, Vt.



Fig. 14. B. F. Mason: Mrs. Simeon Rockwell, 1867
Mrs. Allen Nelson, Middlebury, Vt.

Mrs. Fay (Fig. 9) which must have been done at about the same time. Among the later portraits it is perhaps most noticeable in those of General William Nash, John Miller and Horatio Seymour.

The portrait of Judge Fay also brings out, for the first time among the Masons we have found, a very characteristic device — that of placing a small highlight on the upper surface of the under eyelid. This device, which we have not observed in the work of any of Mason's contemporaries, not only coincides with the observable facts of nature, but also serves plastically to place the eyeball of a painted subject definitely and surely behind the lid. Mason's eyes are often very large, and without the lid-spot they might easily seem to come forward.

The lid-spot does not reproduce well in photographs and may not be observable at all in halftone cuts, but another very personal Mason mannerism certainly will be. That is his method of indicating the folds and crinkles of the heavy, dark materials used for men's clothing with swift, flat, often parallel strokes of white.

No records are left of Mason's contacts and activities in Boston during his first visit besides the two Fay portraits and the entry in the Boston Athenaeum catalogue. It would be interesting if "Miss Lamar, a Southern lass," should prove to have been one of the sisters of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, first president of the Republic of Texas, or of Lucius Quintus Cincinnatus Lamar, the celebrated Confederate diplomat who later served as a Justice of the United States Supreme Court, but all our efforts to find this picture have proved fruitless.

Also fruitless was our effort to prove that the portrait of Jeremiah Mason, "the chief among lawyers," which hangs at Dartmouth College and is attributed to Harding, is actually by B. F. Mason. This is a long, intricate, and, since it had no positive results, a very sad tale. Suffice it to say that there is no conclusive evidence to back up the Harding attribution of the Dartmouth portrait of Jeremiah Mason, who was not related to the subject of this article; that the picture was painted in Boston in 1834, at the time when Jeremiah Mason was on friendly terms with B. F.; and that B. F. Mason painted two portraits of Jeremiah Mason's first cousin and quondam professional associate, Charles Marsh, one of which is also in the Dartmouth collection. All of this adds up to zero when detailed examination of the *Jeremiah Mason* reveals no trace of B. F. Mason's style; but there remains a likelihood that pictures by our artist are masquerading here and there under the names of more celebrated but not necessarily more able men.



Fig. 15. B. F. Mason: Mrs. Rufus Wainwright, c. 1840
Miss Sophia Healy, Middlebury, Vt.



Fig. 16. B. F. Mason: Rufus Wainwright, c. 1840
Miss Sophia Healy, Middlebury, Vt.



Fig. 17. B. F. Mason: Rufus and Gardner Wainwright, c. 1840
Miss Sophia Wainwright, Middlebury, Vt.

While still close to the subject of Mason and the Stuart tradition, perhaps it would be well to jump ahead a few years and cite an instance wherein Mason is indebted to a specific work of his famous predecessor. In 1846 he was commissioned by the Rutland County Bar Association to paint, for the state capitol at Montpelier, a portrait of Charles K. Williams (Fig. 10), who was then retiring after many years as Chief Justice of the Vermont Supreme Court and was later to be elected Governor of the state. This is the only full-length among the adult portraits of Mason which we know. Its setting and accessories are imitated in detail from the "Lansdowne" Washington of Stuart, or from one of the several engravings after it (Fig. 12) which were widely circulated. (Mason's will mentions a collection of engravings in his possession.) It is not merely a matter of the use of Roman columns, drapes, books, and so on in both pictures — such things were then part of the standard iconography for portraits of men in public life — but the arrangement of the columns, the drapes and the open space beyond, and the placement of the figure, table and inkstand are nearly identical in both cases. Ezra Ames' famous portrait of Governor George Clinton of New York (Fig. 11), which was painted in 1812 and which Mason may have seen in the state house in Albany during the days of his residence in Troy, is similarly indebted to the Lansdowne Washington, but Ames tries to cover his tracks by reversing everything in the composition except the feet and the architectural background. The influence of this famous Stuart may also be seen, in a less naive fashion, in many other portraits of this period, like Harding's *John Marshall* at the Boston Athenaeum or Sully's *Captain Charles Stewart* at the National Gallery.

Observe, however, that Judge Williams is seated, while Governor Clinton, Justice Marshall and Captain Stewart stand. Perhaps Judge Williams was a very short man and was posed to best advantage in a seated posture, but there may be a great deal more to it. We have never found a standing figure by B. F. Mason, and in view of the fact that he was a cripple and could not comfortably stand himself, this circumstance takes on very interesting psychological overtones.

V

Mason lived in Troy from 1838 to 1840: Battell's statement to this effect is confirmed by entries in the Troy city directory. Battell mentions several of his sitters in that city, but only one of their portraits can, with

any certainty, be located today. That is the portrait of Mayor George L. Tibbits which is still preserved in the Troy city hall. According to a note in the Tibbits family archives, Mason was paid \$150 for this picture, which would seem to have been his standard price. Sometimes, however, he took out his fees in board and lodging, living with a family until a portrait or group of portraits was finished, and receiving in cash the difference between the cost of his living accommodations and his \$150 per canvas.

Other sidelights on Mason's personal relations with his sitters are to be found in some letters preserved among the memorabilia of the Rockwell family of Middlebury. These date from 1867, but they fit most gracefully into our story at this point.

On January 16, 1867, Mrs. Simeon Rockwell writes to her daughter, Cornelia, who was away at school, "I am getting ready for our portrait painter, doing work that I shall not want to do while he is here." Five days later Cornelia writes to her sister, Mary, who was in Montreal, as follows:

"Father and mother are going to have their portraits taken by Mr. Mason soon, I believe. I think if they keep on trying they will get something that looks like them after a while. I told mother not to try and look so handsome as she does generally sitting for a picture."

On the same day Mrs. Rockwell writes to Cornelia:

"Mr. Mason is coming the last of this week so you will have a chance to see him paint portraits. I want yours and Mary's ever so much for those frames that have our portraits (photographs?) and maybe I shall make it out. Possibly he may be doing other work in town, so be here when Mary comes."

But Mary did not come, as witness this excerpt from a letter Cornelia sent her on February 18:

"I received your letter this morning and now hasten to answer it. I should think that you thought I had nothing else to do but write, but I guess you would change your mind if you were here. Mr. Mason has just left this morning and we have had plenty to do while he was here. There have been two tables set the whole time and everything has been done to make it pleasant. Their portraits are very handsome indeed. Father's I think is the most natural. Mother's picture is indeed beautiful, but I wouldn't have that man here another four weeks for any money. He was very particular about everything and talks about everybody where he has ever been. Young people he can't endure and I've had to carry myself pretty straight. I think you ought to thank your stars that you were away."

(For the portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Rockwell painted at this time see Figs. 13 and 14.)



Fig. 18. B. F. Mason: George Chapman, c. 1850
Mrs. George Chapman, Woodstock, Vt.



Fig. 19. B. F. Mason: Mrs. George Chapman, c. 1850
Mrs. George Chapman, Woodstock, Vt.

VI

The 1840's are Mason's best decade. Battell cites many portraits which he painted in Middlebury in 1841, 1844 and 1846, and we have found most of them. On stylistic grounds we also assign some of his Woodstock and Pomfret pictures to this era. According to Battell, Mason also worked in Buffalo about 1842-3, but the Buffalo city directory places him there only between 1855 and 1857. Perhaps he went to that city twice and was not listed in the directory on the first occasion. Battell says his Buffalo sojourn was instigated by Edward Warren, a member of a prominent Middlebury family who had settled in the pioneer town near Niagara in 1834.²²

In Mason's Middlebury, Woodstock and Pomfret pictures of the 1840's there is a complete and happy fusion between what he wished to do and what he should have done. In all of them — but especially in the portraits of the Wainwright family (Figs. 15, 16 and 17), Martha Brainerd Reed, Mr. and Mrs. George Chapman (Figs. 18 and 19), Ira Stewart (Fig. 20), the Miller and Hewitt families reproduced by Vail,¹¹ and the group of lawyers whose portraits hang in the Windsor County Court House in Woodstock — the artist's mastery of anatomy and of character portrayal is at its height; allied with this in almost every instance is a deft, sure-handed plastic realization which gives the pictures high validity as paintings and not merely as likenesses; and the color orchestration is richer and more radiant than in any other period of Mason's work. The matte black of Abby Wainwright's shawl (Fig. 15) against the shiny black of her dress bespeaks both a sensitivity and a craftsmanship in color that is rare among provincial American portrait painters of that time, and the crisp technique of the drawing and modeling at times recalls that of the French classicists. But there are also many romantic, Sully-like elements. Most romantic of all these pictures, perhaps, is the double portrait of Rufus Wainwright, Junior, and his brother, Gardner (Fig. 17), which in some ways reminds one of Copley's *Boy with the Flying Squirrel*. That Mason depicts a Vermont schoolboy of the 1840's in an Elizabethan doublet and ruff is amusing, but this is not nearly so amusing a commentary on romanticism, Green Mountain version, as the wildly improbable landscape against which both boys are set.

Mason was never a powerful painter, but he comes close to power in his portraits of the elder Wainwrights, of Ira Stewart (Fig. 20) and of Edwin Hutchinson (Fig. 21.) In none of these is the Stuart tradition very



Fig. 20. B. F. Mason: Ira Stewart, 1846
Mrs. Charles Swift, Middlebury, Vt.

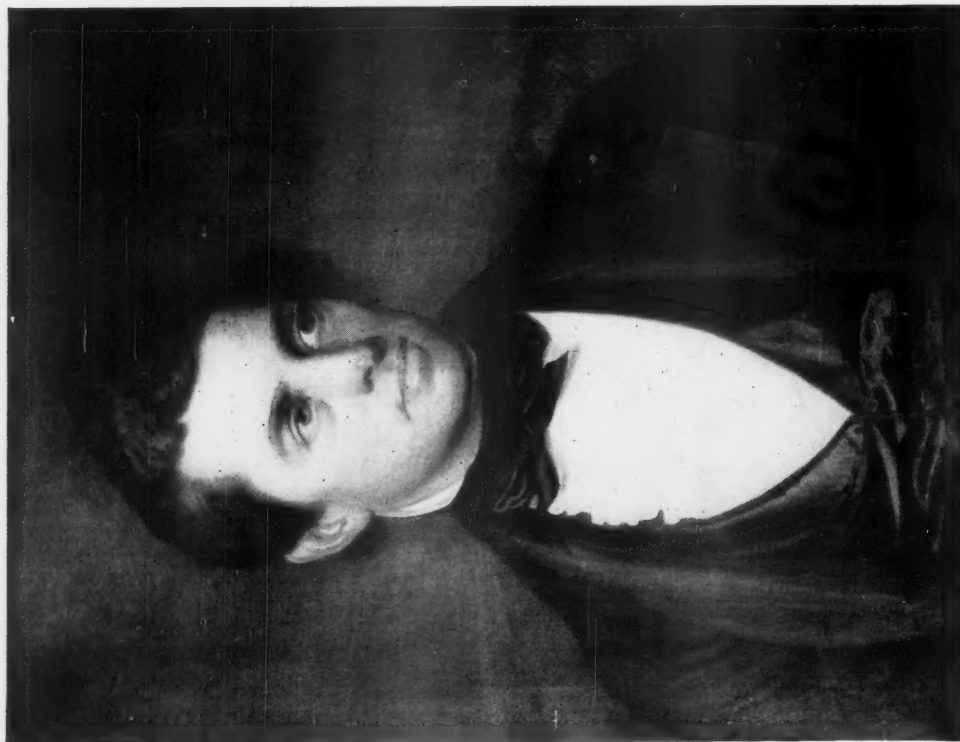


Fig. 21. B. F. Mason: Edwin Hutchinson, c. 1846
Windsor County Court House, Woodstock, Vt.

strongly apparent, except, perhaps, in the *Rufus Wainwright, Senior* (Fig. 16). The history of American portraiture may some day be written in terms of a long tussle between monumentality, solid placement and detailed observation on the one hand, and gallantry, dispatch and swift summary on the other. Mason vacillates between the two points of view, and in some of his works there are elements of both, but he is probably at his best when working in the former tradition.

In addition to the pictures mentioned in the immediately preceding paragraphs, Mason must have spent much time during the 1840's painting his portraits of the Nash family — General William Nash, founder of the Bank of Middlebury, his wife, their ten sons, and the wives of the nine sons who were married. This must surely be accounted one of the most remarkable instances of wholesale dynastic portrait painting in the history of American art. So far we have located the portraits of General and Mrs. Nash and three of the sons.

Other typical Masons of the 1840's which we reproduce are his portraits of the Tilden children (Fig. 22), Horatio Seymour (Fig. 23), and Charles Marsh (Fig. 24). A replica of the last-named picture was painted for Dartmouth College a decade later; the rosy, Stuart-like flesh-tones of the earlier version (these same flesh-tones are also to be seen in the *Titus Hutchinson*) are gone, and their place has been taken by a tighter, harder treatment which is characteristic of Mason's work in the 1850's. Another good example of his style at this time is *Dr. Thomas E. Powers* (Fig. 25).

The last twenty years of Mason's life trace a long decline, but with numerous reminiscent outcroppings of fine achievement. Battell's memoir grows hazy at this point, and the story of the artist's life during those final decades must be filled in from other sources.

He is listed in the Boston city directory for 1850-51; perhaps this marks the undated Boston visit mentioned by Battell during which he won "warm commendation from his friend Alexander as the best painter of hair in America." This, however, was not enough, and about 1852 Mason turned up in Wisconsin.

According to the tradition of the Ormsbee family, Mason went first to Milwaukee at the suggestion of an old friend — perhaps Charles Nash, who had followed his father's footsteps in founding a bank in Milwaukee, or Jedd Cottrill, the Milwaukee lawyer, whose parents Mason is known to have painted in Montpelier.¹² The Milwaukee venture apparently did not pan out well, for when his old school-fellow, Samuel Belknap Ormsbee, found him there he is said to have been in deep distress, both financial'y



Fig. 22. B. F. Mason: Julia, Mary Ann and Harriet Tilden, c. 1840
John Morceland, Mill Valley, Cal.

and physically. "Trader Sam" Ormsbee was then going through a rather prosaic interlude in his adventurous life, running a clothing store in Sheboygan, and there Mason spent a winter as a guest in Ormsbee's home. He painted several portraits of his host's family. Those of Ormsbee's mother-in-law, Betsy Peak Smith, and her cousin, Eliza Grover Chase (Fig. 26), are in Mason's best 1840 style; but in the others, plastic realization falls off markedly, and the sentimentality which had always marked his work with children reaches a high tide in his group picture of Ormsbee's daughter and two sons.

As pointed out above, Mason was in Buffalo from 1855 to 1857, but we have yet to find a trace of his work there. His teacher, Abraham Tut-hill, had been in Buffalo twenty years earlier and had made a clearly perceptible impression on the community. Not so Mason, who is ignored in the voluminous writings of Lars Gustav Sellstedt, the Buffalo portrait painter and historian of art in that town. The lack of Masoniana in Buffalo, plus Mason's extended wanderings during that decade, indicate that the 1850's were a time of trouble for him, as they were for the nation as a whole. It is very likely, however, that portraits by Mason are preserved in some private homes in Buffalo and that we have simply not hit upon the right combination for finding them. Almost all his work is still privately held, and getting at it depends upon accidents of personal contact and the publication of articles like this one.

According to Dana,¹⁰ Mason built a house in Woodstock in 1861, and his ownership of a residence in that town is indicated by his will. There he resided until his death ten years later, taking a normal part in the life of the community, but he often went forth from Woodstock to work on commissions elsewhere. He painted John Godfrey Saxe and his wife (Figs. 27 and 28) in Albany, and there are portraits of this period in Middlebury, St. Albans, Montpelier, and elsewhere. Many of his works, like *Philip Battell*, *Harvey Kitchell* (Fig. 29), *Mehitabel Preston de Long* (Fig. 30) and *Elizabeth de Long Rockwell* (Fig. 32), are remarkable for their characterization. Others, like the four portraits of the Saxe family (Mason also painted John Godfrey Saxe's brother James and his wife), are remarkable for their elegance. Seldom, however, is there any reflection of the plastic achievement of the 1840's. In nearly all of these pictures — most of them oval in form and set in square frames with elaborately carved spandrels — there is, rather, an emphasis upon fussily observed detail which destroys the integrity of the drawing, and often there is nothing by way of characterization or subject-interest to compensate for this loss. At times

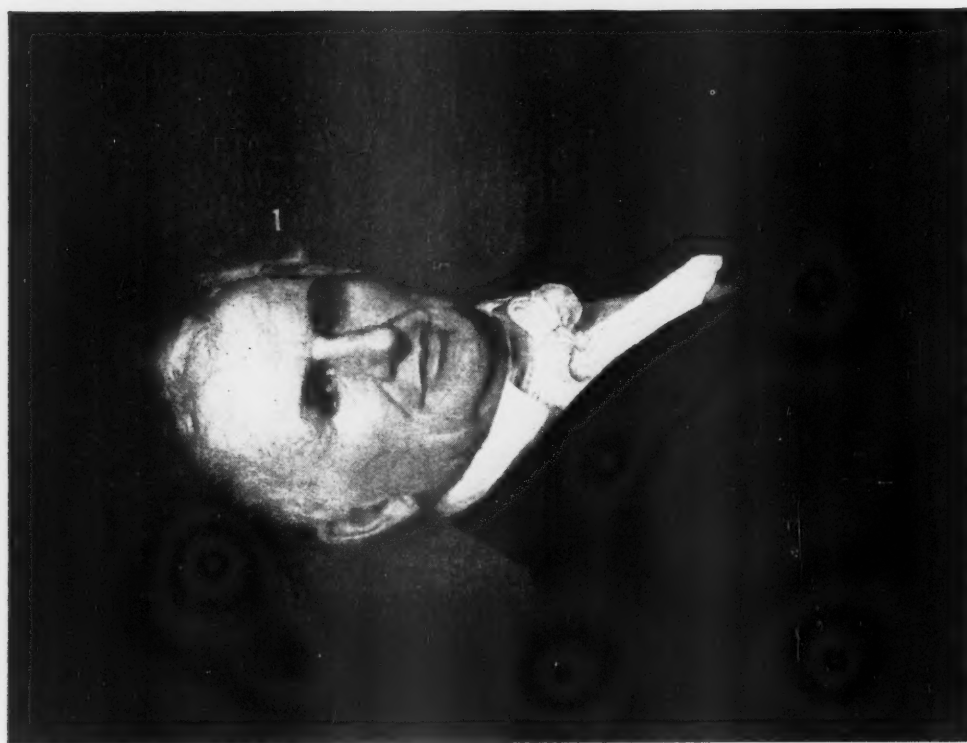


Fig. 23. B. F. Mason: Horatio Seymour, 1846
John W. Stewart, Santa Barbara, Cal.

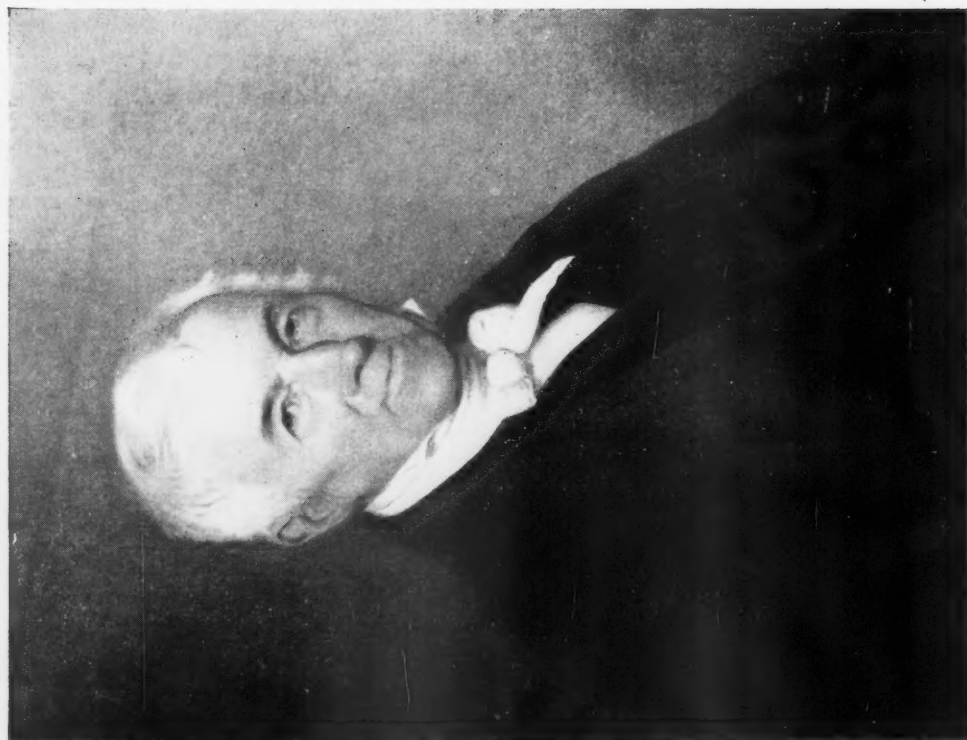


Fig. 24. B. F. Mason: Charles Marsh, c. 1846
Windsor County Court House, Woodstock, Vt.

the results are so horrible — as in the gross, dull portrait of Norman Williams (Fig. 31) in the court house at Woodstock — that we decline to accept a traditional attribution to Mason unless we are forced to do so by uncontrovertible external evidence.

What has happened, of course, is that photography has moved into the field of portraiture, and the painters, trying to beat the camera at its own game, lose both direction and craftsmanship. At the end, Mason leaves the company of Tuthill, Earl, Harding, Inman and Asher Durand (to whom, at one point, Battell compares him) and joins that of George P. A. Healy and Daniel Huntington at their worst.

It was not only Benjamin Franklin Mason who died at Woodstock, Vermont, on January 15, 1871; it was also an era in American art.

VII

Very few of Mason's portraits are signed or dated. Many, however, are given specific dates by Battell and other writers, and we have accepted these dates when they do not conflict with ascertainable evidence concerning the ages of the sitters and the period-style of their costumes. Thus we have established fairly definite criteria for Mason's painting at various stages of his career, and these criteria, again checked with the facts about the subjects and their dress, have enabled us to assign approximate dates for those pictures which are not signed or mentioned in the literature.

The following is a complete chronological list of the portraits by Mason which we know to exist at the present time. In each case the date is given first. Dates not qualified with the letter "c" can be verified either by the artist's own inscription or by a reference in the literature; the literary references are indicated by the small superior numbers, which relate to the corresponding entries in the bibliography on Page 43. Dates which are qualified with the letter "c" have been assigned by us on the basis of internal evidence. After the date, each entry continues with the name of the sitter, and, in parentheses, the address and name of the present owner of the picture.

- c. 1824: Harriet Mason. Signed but not dated. (Sheffield, Mass.: J. Stuart Halladay and Herrel George Thomas.)
- 1826: The Bugbee Family. Signed and dated, November, 1826. (Sheffield, Mass.: J. Stuart Halladay and Herrel George Thomas.)
- 1828: Samuel Belknap Ormsbee. Date on back, not in Mason's handwriting. (Capitola, Cal.: Horatio N. Ormsbee.)
- c. 1831: Mrs. Lebdeus Harris. (Middlebury, Vt.: Sheldon Museum.)



Fig. 25 B. F. Mason: Dr. Thomas E. Powers, 1858
Windsor County Court House, Woodstock, Vt.



Fig. 26. B. F. Mason: Eliza Grover Chase, c. 1852
Miss Daisy O'Brien, South Pasadena, Cal.

- c. 1831: Harvey Bell. (Middlebury, Vt.: Miss Sophia Wainwright.)
 c. 1831: Mrs. Harvey Bell. (Middlebury, Vt.: Miss Sophia Wainwright.)
 c. 1831: Mrs. Philip Battell. (Middlebury, Vt.: Mrs. Charles Swift.)
 c. 1831: Daniel Roberts. Inscribed on back, "painted by Mason." (Middlebury, Vt.: Middlebury College.)
 c. 1831: Prof. John Hough. (Middlebury, Vt.: Middlebury College.)
 c. 1831: President Joshua Bates. (Middlebury, Vt.: Middlebury College.)
 1832: Halsey Rogers Wing. Dated but not signed. (Sacramento, Cal.: Mrs. Angela Wing Roth.)
 1832: Mrs. Halsey Rogers Wing. (Sacramento, Cal.: Mrs. Angela Wing Roth.)
 c. 1834: Thomas Jolls Ormsbee. (New Canaan, Conn.: Thomas H. Ormsbee.)
 c. 1834: Mrs. Thomas Jolls Ormsbee. (New Canaan, Conn.: Thomas H. Ormsbee.)
 c. 1834: Edgar Ormsbee. (New Canaan, Conn.: Thomas H. Ormsbee.)
 1834:¹⁷ Judge Samuel Prescott Phillips Fay. (Boston, Mass.: Masonic Temple.)
 c. 1834: Mrs. Samuel Prescott Phillips Fay. (Hartford, Conn.: Mrs. John Cook.)
 c. 1840: General William Nash. (Middlebury, Vt.: Bank of Middlebury.)
 c. 1840: Mrs. William Nash. (Chicago, Ill.: Mrs. Einar Bjorklund.)
 c. 1840: Phelps Nash. (Middlebury, Vt.: Phelps Swett.)
 c. 1840: Jonathan Nash. (Chicago, Ill.: Mrs. Melville Hegler.)
 c. 1840: Fordyce Nash. (Riverside, Ill.: Mrs. L. R. Walker.)
 1840-41:¹⁷ Rufus Wainwright. (Middlebury, Vt.: Miss Sophia Healy.)
 1840-41:¹⁷ Mrs. Rufus Wainwright. (Middlebury, Vt.: Miss Sophia Healy.)
 1840-41:¹⁷ Rufus and Gardner Wainwright. (Middlebury, Vt.: Miss Sophia Wainwright.)
 1840-41:¹⁷ Julia, Mary Ann and Harriet Tilden. (Mill Valley, Cal.: John Moreland.)
 c. 1841: Frederick Morton. (Middlebury, Vt.: Sheldon Museum.)
 c. 1841: Martha Brainerd Reed. (San Francisco, Cal.: Miss Cora May.)
 1846:¹⁹ Chief Justice Charles K. Williams. (Montpelier, Vt.: State Capitol.)
 1846:¹⁷ Ira Stewart. (Middlebury, Vt.: Mrs. Charles Swift.)
 1846:¹⁷ Dr. Thomas Abbot Merrill. (Middlebury, Vt.: Middlebury College.)
 1846:¹⁷ Horatio Seymour. (Santa Barbara, Cal.: John W. Stewart.)
 c. 1846: William Seymour Morton. (Middlebury, Vt.: Sheldon Museum.)
 c. 1846: Edwin Hutchinson. (Woodstock, Vt.: Windsor County Court House.)
 c. 1846: Charles Marsh. (Woodstock, Vt.: Windsor County Court House.)
 c. 1846: Titus Hutchinson. (Woodstock, Vt.: Windsor County Court House.)
 c. 1847:¹⁷ Peter Starr. (Mt. Kisco, N. Y.: Mrs. Katherine Starr Oliver.)
 c. 1847:¹⁷ Mrs. Peter Starr. (Mt. Kisco, N. Y.: Mrs. Katherine Starr Oliver.)
 c. 1848: Agnes, Julia, Mary, Helen, William, Edward and Charles Ripley. (Santa Barbara, Cal.: Thomas E. Ripley.)
 c. 1850: Nancy Morton. (Middlebury, Vt.: Sheldon Museum.)
 c. 1850: George Chapman. (Woodstock, Vt.: Mrs. George Chapman.)
 c. 1850: Mrs. George Chapman. (Woodstock, Vt.: Mrs. George Chapman.)
 c. 1852: Betsy Peak Smith. (Milwaukee, Wis.: Mrs. James Franklin Trottmann.)
 c. 1852: Eliza Grover Chase. (South Pasadena, Cal.: Miss Daisy O'Brien.)
 c. 1852: Mrs. Samuel Belknap Ormsbee and Sidney Smith Ormsbee. (Capitola, Cal.: Horatio N. Ormsbee.)
 c. 1852: Edgar, Sarah and Albert Ormsbee. (Capitola, Cal.: Horatio N. Ormsbee.)
 c. 1856:¹⁷ Julius Beckwith. (Middlebury, Vt.: Wesley Murdock.)



Fig. 27. B. F. Mason: John Godfrey Saxe, c. 1860
Mrs. Allen T. Clement, Saranac Lake, N. Y.



Fig. 28. B. F. Mason: Mrs. John Godfrey Saxe, c. 1860
Mrs. Allen T. Clement, Saranac Lake, N. Y.

- c. 1856: William Young Ripley. (Montclair, N. J.: Dr. Warren Ripley.)
- c. 1856: Mrs. William Young Ripley. (Montclair, N. J.: Dr. Warren Ripley.)
- c. 1857: Charles Marsh. Replica of the portrait in the Windsor County Court House, Woodstock, Vt. (Hanover, N. H.: Dartmouth College.)
- 1858: Thomas E. Powers. Signed and dated on back. (Woodstock, Vt.: Windsor County Court House.)
- c. 1860: William Young Ripley. (Santa Barbara, Cal.: Thomas E. Ripley.)
- c. 1860: Mrs. William Young Ripley. (Santa Barbara, Cal.: Thomas E. Ripley.)
- c. 1860: "Uncle Henry." (Santa Barbara, Cal.: Thomas E. Ripley.)
- c. 1860: John Godfrey Saxe. (Saranac Lake, N. Y.: Mrs. Allen T. Clement.)
- c. 1860: Mrs. John Godfrey Saxe. (Saranac Lake, N. Y.: Mrs. Allen T. Clement.)
- c. 1860: James Saxe. (New York City: John Godfrey Saxe.)
- c. 1860: Mrs. James Saxe. (New York City: John Godfrey Saxe.)
- c. 1860: Abby Wainwright Beckwith. (Middlebury, Vt.: Wesley Murdock.)
- c. 1860: Charles Giles Wainwright. (Middlebury, Vt.: Wesley Murdock.)
- c. 1860: Prof. Henry Martin Seeley. (Middlebury, Vt.: Middlebury College.)
- 1865:¹⁷ Elga Stewart. (Middlebury, Vt.: Mrs. Charles Swift.)
- c. 1865: Dugald Stewart. (Middlebury, Vt.: Mrs. Charles Swift.)
- c. 1865:¹⁷ Paris Fletcher. (Worcester, Mass.: Paris Fletcher.)
- c. 1865: President Harvey Kitchell. (Middlebury, Vt.: Middlebury College.)
- c. 1865: Elizabeth de Long Rockwell. (Middlebury, Vt.: Charles A. Adams.)
- c. 1865: Mehitabel Preston de Long. (Middlebury, Vt.: Charles A. Adams.)
- c. 1865: Simeon Rockwell. (Middlebury, Vt.: Charles A. Adams.)
- c. 1865: Sylvester Bird Rockwell. (Middlebury, Vt.: Mrs. Allen T. Nelson.)
- c. 1865: James de Long. (Middlebury, Vt.: Charles A. Adams.)
- c. 1865: Mary Jones Rockwell. (Cornwall, Vt.: Miss Beulah Sanford.)
- c. 1865: Mrs. Charles Joyce. (Montpelier, Vt.: Vermont Historical Society.)
- c. 1865: James Meech Warner. (Worcester, Mass.: Paris Fletcher.)
- c. 1865: Portrait of a Lady. (Worcester, Mass.: Paris Fletcher.)
- c. 1865: Portrait of a Gentleman. (Worcester, Mass.: Paris Fletcher.)
- 1867: Philip Battell. Signed and dated. (Middlebury, Vt.: Community House.)
- c. 1867: Hiram Bellows. (St. Albans, Vt.: Bellows Free Academy.)
- c. 1867: Mrs. Hiram Bellows. (St. Albans, Vt.: Bellows Free Academy.)
- 1870:¹⁷ Alice, Beaumelle and Frances Rockwell. (Los Angeles, Cal.: Mrs. E. B. Kimball.)

The following portraits by Mason are known to us only through photographs and reproductions:

- 1840-41:¹⁷ Lucius Tilden. Ambrotype reproduction. (Mill Valley, Cal.: John Moreland.)
- c. 1855: Mrs. Henry Hodges. Photograph at the Frick Art Reference Library, heretofore the only Mason on file there. The owner, Miss Katherine Dewey, formerly of Yonkers, N. Y., cannot be located.
- 1858-60:¹⁸ Hiland Hall. Copy of a Mason by Mrs. P. L. Robinson of Bennington, Vt. (Montpelier, Vt.: State Capitol.)

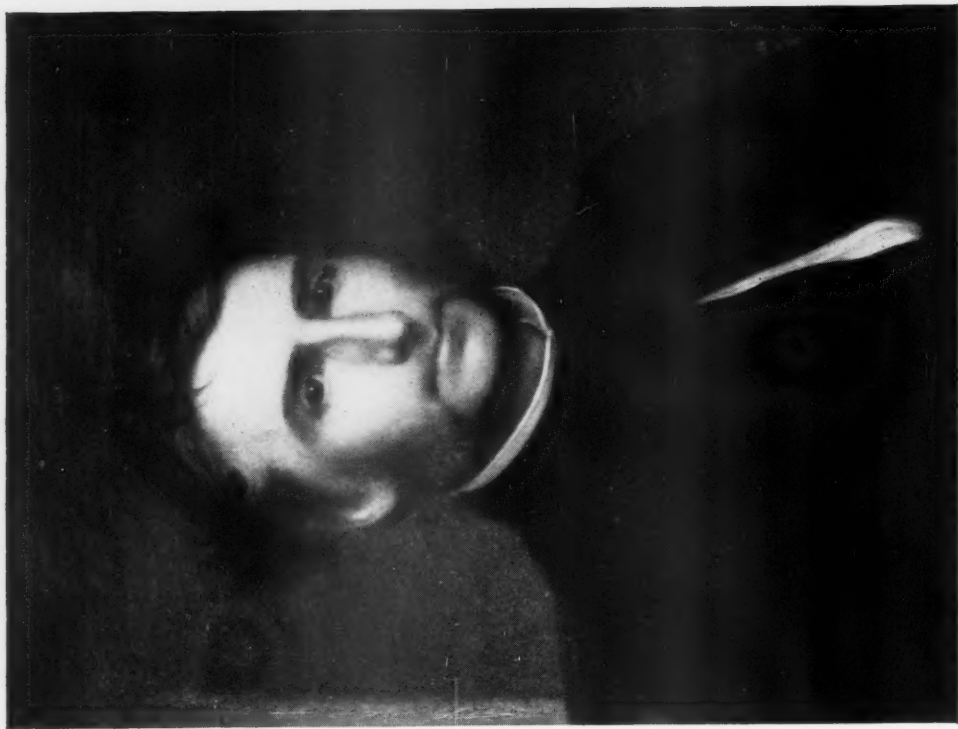


Fig. 29. B. F. Mason: Harvey Kitchell, c. 1865
Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vt.



Fig. 30. B. F. Mason: Mehitabel Preston de long, c. 1865
Mrs. Charles A. Adams, Middlebury, Vt.

Vail¹¹ gives four excellent photogravure reproductions of portraits by Mason, all dating from about 1840: John Miller, Alice Shepherd Hewitt, Rebecca Miller Hewitt, and Hannah Crosby Miller.

Swift²¹ provides numerous portraits in lithograph. The *Horatio Seymour*, *Rufus Wainwright*, *Thomas Abbot Merrill* and *Julius Beckwith* are taken from portraits by Mason which we have found. The *Hastings Warren* and *Samuel Swift* are also after our artist, but we have not located the originals.

We regard the following portraits, some of which are traditionally ascribed to Mason and some of which are not, as doubtful or possible works of his:

Ovid Miner. (Middlebury, Vt.: Sheldon Museum.)
Norman Williams. (Woodstock, Vt.: Windsor County Court House.)
The Dana Children. (North Bennington, Vt.: Hall McCullough.)
Prof. R. F. Fowler. (Middlebury, Vt.: Middlebury College.)
Mrs. Norman Williams. (Woodstock, Vt.: Norman Williams Library.)
Senator Jacob Callander. (Woodstock, Vt.: Historical House.)
Seth Arnold. (Ascutney, Vt.: Mrs. Gage Rogers.)
Mrs. Seth Arnold. (Ascutney, Vt.: Mrs. Gage Rogers.)
Gamaliel Painter. Said to be a copy by Mason of a portrait by Ralph Rogers. (Middlebury, Vt.: Sheldon Museum.)
D. L. Seymour. (Old Bennington, Vt.: Mrs. Townsend K. Wellington.)
Walter Seymour. (Old Bennington, Vt.: Mrs. Townsend K. Wellington.)
Mrs. D. L. Seymour. (Old Bennington, Vt.: Mrs. Townsend K. Wellington.)

The following portraits by Mason are mentioned in the literature, but we have failed to find them:

Portrait of a Lady. Boston Athenaeum catalogue.²

Mary Sollace. Saxe letter.¹⁶

Mr. and Mrs. Mahlon Cottrill. Hemenway.¹²

The remaining undiscovered works are all cited by Battell. They include Mason's portrait of his school teacher, painted at Pomfret when he was 14 years of age; Nelson Rogers (Middlebury, 1831); "Miss Lamar" (Cambridge, Mass., 1834); Jonas C. Heartt, D. L. Seymour and Mrs. D. L. Seymour — these may be the Seymour portraits listed above among the doubtful Masons — (Troy, N. Y., 1838-40); Mrs. Lucius Tilden, and Olivia Norton (Middlebury, 1840-41); Joseph Warner, and Mrs. John Wainwright and daughter (Middlebury, 1844); Mrs. Harvey Kitchell (Middlebury, 1865); and Mary Elizabeth Barber (no place or date given.)



Fig. 31. B. F. Mason: Norman Williams, c. 1867
Windsor County Court House, Woodstock, Vt.



Fig. 32. B. F. Mason: Elizabeth de Long Rockwell, c. 1865
Mrs. Charles A. Adams, Middlebury, Vt.

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³American Provincial Paintings, 1680-1860, from the Collection of J. Stuart Halladay and Herrel George Thomas. Department of Fine Arts, Carnegie Institute, Pittsburgh, 1941. No. 46: *The Bugbee Family*.

⁴Ralph Clifton Smith: *Biographical Index of American Painters*. Baltimore, 1930.

⁵*1440 Early American Portrait Artists*, compiled by Historical Records Survey, Works Progress Administration. Newark, N. J., 1940.

⁶Jean Lipman: *American Primitive Painting*. New York, 1942.

⁷Richmond Huntley: *Benjamin Franklin Mason, Vermont Portrait Painter*. In *American Collector*, Vol. VI, No. 11, December, 1937.

⁸Charles Knowles Bolton: *Workers with Line and Color in New England, 1620-1870*. Unpublished manuscript at the Boston Athenaeum.

⁹Edna Warren Mason: *Descendants of Captain Hugh Mason in America*. New Haven, Conn., 1932.

¹⁰Henry Swan Dana: *History of Woodstock, Vermont*. Boston, 1889.

¹¹Henry Hobart Vail: *Pomfret, Vermont*. Boston, 1930.

¹²Abby Maria Hemenway, (Hiram Huse, editor): *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*. Montpelier, 1882.

¹³Mary Greene Nye: *Vermont's State House*. Montpelier, 1936.

¹⁴Margaret T. Smalley: *Notes on Early Vermont Artists*. In *Proceedings of the Vermont Historical Society*, Vol. IX, No. 3-4, September, 1943.

¹⁵Sylvester Bird Rockwell: Letter to the editor of the *Vermont Standard*, Woodstock, Vt., January 19, 1871.

¹⁶Mary S. Saxe: Letter to the editor of *The Burlington Free Press*, Burlington, Vt., November 21, 1938.

¹⁷Philip Battell: *Benjamin Franklin Mason*. In *New England Genealogical Register and Antiquarian Journal*, Vol. XXVI, No. 3, July, 1872. Corrected by a list of errata in Vol. XXVI, No. 4, October, 1872.

¹⁸Clara Endicott Sears: *Some American Primitives*. Boston, 1941.

¹⁹Mantle Fielding: *Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors and Engravers*. New York, 1945.

²⁰William Sawitzky: *Ralph Earl*. Whitney Museum Catalogue, 1945.

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²²Charles W. Evans: *History of St. Paul's Church, Buffalo, N. Y.*, Buffalo, 1903.

ABRAHAM G. D. TUTHILL



Fig. 1. A. G. D. Tuthill: Benjamin West, c. 1798
Mrs. R. W. Huse, Montpelier, Vt.



Fig. 2. A. G. D. Tuthill: Dr. Thomas Vail (?), c. 1815 (?)
Mrs. R. W. Huse, Montpelier, Vt.

Abraham G. D. Tuthill

"Every movement is the work not of one man but of many, and to comprehend our major artists we must know the minor figures who worked beside them. This is the justification, if one is needed, for the painstaking research which sometimes seems to squander an unwarranted measure of time and effort on art of less than heroic dimensions. But it is through the by-ways of our art as much as through the well-trodden paths that we are gradually reaching a fuller understanding of the complexity and richness of our native schools."

These lines from a recent article by John I. H. Baur in the *College Art Journal* are precisely right in drift and tone to introduce a brief study of a rather special catch we have made in the more obscure waters of 19th century American painting. His name was Abraham G. D. Tuthill, although in the free and easy orthography of his time, he is often called Abram Tuttle and Abram Tuthill; in one delightful instance he is dubbed "Toothell." We first ran across his trail in studying the work of Benjamin Franklin Mason, who was a kind of second-hand pupil of his. We knew nothing about him, and we quickly discovered that others knew very little. In order to throw some light on his influence upon Mason, we searched for and found a few of his pictures. We excavated further, and eventually decided to report on Tuthill separately.

The literature on this artist is so meager that all of it can be transcribed in less than a dozen paragraphs. In chronological order, these references are as follows:

January 14, 1825. *Detroit Gazette*, page 2, col. 2: "Portrait painting. — We wish to make it known to our citizens generally, that Mr. Toothell, one of the most eminent portrait painters in the United States, is now in this city, for the purpose of pursuing his avocation (sic) for a brief period. Mr. Toothell is a pupil of the celebrated West, and has with him testimonials of his ability from gentlemen of acknowledged taste and judgment. We have had the satisfaction of seeing pieces from Mr. Toothell's pencil, and do not fear to hazard the assertion, that as an excellent artist and faithful painter, he may be ranked among the most celebrated of any country. Mr. Toothell may be found at the Sagana Hotel, kept by Mr. Holly."

February 11, 1825. *Detroit Gazette*, page 2: "Portrait of Washington. Mr. Tuthell, (sic) the gentleman to whom we alluded in an article a few weeks since, has nearly completed a full-length portrait of George Washington. It is a transparent painting and is intended for public and patriotic occasions. It is to be hoped that our citizens will embrace this opportunity of furnishing themselves with a painting which, in so many points of view, it is desirable for a patriotic community to possess."

1834. William Dunlap: *History of the Rise and Progress of the Arts of Design in the United States*: "TUTHILL. In the year 1812, as far as memory serves me, I



Fig. 3. A. G. D. Tuthill: Mrs. Ezekiel Walton, c. 1811.
Mrs. Angela Wing Roth, Sacramento, Cal.

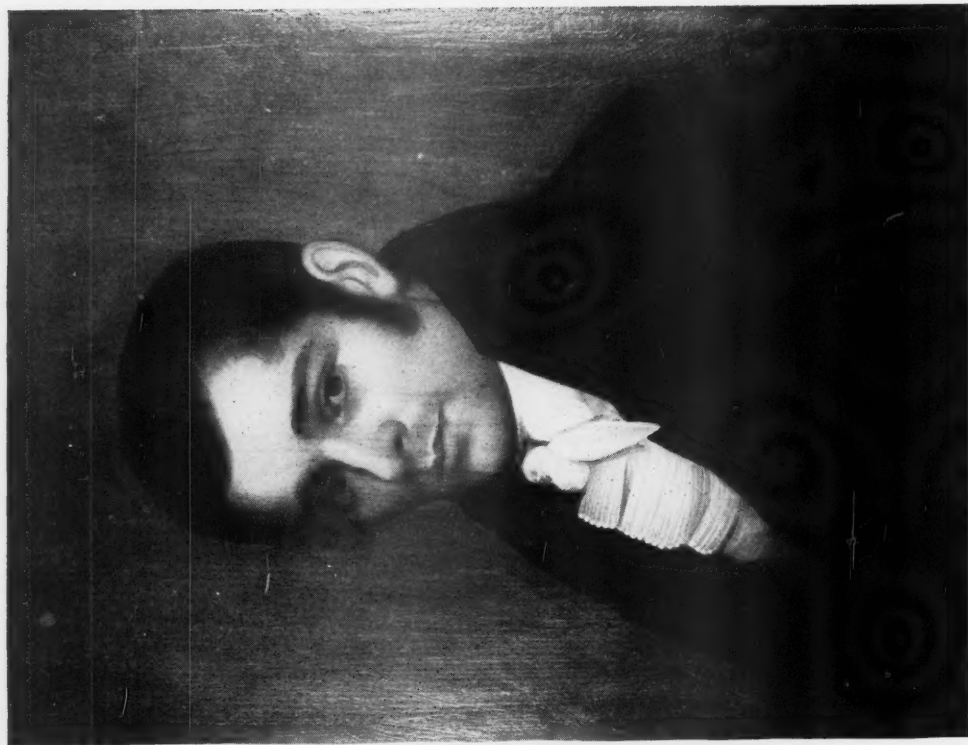


Fig. 4. A. G. D. Tuthill: General Ezekiel Walton, c. 1811
Mrs. Angela Wing Roth, Sacramento, Cal.

saw for the first time this artist. He was then painting in Chatham Street, New York, was a married man, and had several portraits in his room. He told me that he had been to London to study the art; but his works bore little indication of that school. I lost sight of him for many years, but met him again in Utica, much improved in manner, appearance and painting. He had been successful as an itinerant; and by presenting smooth and well-varnished pictures, with some resemblance to his sitters, he was accumulating property."

June 16, 1843. Obituary column of the *Vermont Watchman*, Montpelier: "In this village June 12, Mr. A. G. D. Tuthill, aged 67, late of Buffalo, N. Y., a gentleman very extensively known as an artist, particularly in historical and portrait painting; a pupil of Benjamin West. The christian's hope sustained him in his long protracted sickness and is a gratifying consolation to his surviving relatives."

1872. Philip Battell: *Memoir of Benjamin Franklin Mason in New England Genealogical Register and Antiquarian Journal*, Vol. XXVI, No. 3: "Ware in the interval" (between 1818 and 1820) "had met with Abram Tuttle, a portrait painter, of whom both must have heard, a native of Pomfret" (Vermont), "one with West in England, who had returned for an interval and was painting among his friends. Ware had talent, the painter was obliging, and what the lad learned of the master he taught in turn to his more studious friend."

1882. Abby Maria Hemenway: *Vermont Historical Gazetteer*, Vol. IV, page 519: "Abraham G. D. Tuthill was born at Oyster Pond, Long Island, and in due time chose to become an artist. To perfect himself, he spent seven years as a pupil of the great painter, Benjamin West, in London, and one year in Paris. Returning to this country, he spent a few years in Montpelier, where a sister resided, and where now there are to be found many beautiful specimens of his work. His artist life was mainly spent at Buffalo, Detroit and other western cities, but he returned to Montpelier and died there, June 12, 1843, aged 67."

1904. Lars Gustav Sellstedt: *From Forecastle to Academy*, this painter's autobiography: "Mr. Sellstedt was talking to Dr. Shelton" (a well known Episcopal minister of Buffalo) "while painting his portrait. Dr. Shelton spoke of Mr. Tuttle, and these are his own words:

"The first thing that Mr. Tuttle said after he began was, 'Mr. Shelton, I don't believe one word of the Bible.' I was greatly shocked, but believing that he spoke through ignorance, I made up my mind that it was my duty to convert him. I did my best to show him his error, and he asked me to lend him books to read. I finally succeeded in changing his view and to accept the church's doctrine, but' — here with an expression of disgust — 'the fellow went and joined the Presbyterians.'"

1910. Lars Gustav Sellstedt: *Art in Buffalo*: "Before their destruction by fire in the old city building, many interesting, and among them good portraits of the early makers of Buffalo were seen. Most, if not all, were portraits of former mayors. While his modest salary was twelve hundred dollars, the reigning mayor was expected to disburse it all, or nearly all, for his counterfeit presentment in oil, to become public property, the honor of the office being held in those primitive times sufficient reward for his services.

"Many of these portraits were made by Mr. A. G. D. Tuthill, an Englishman who had studied art under Benjamin West. He had many good qualities as an artist, such as careful and correct design and natural coloring, though a certain primness and stiffness of pose often marred his work."



Fig. 5. A. G. D. Tuthill:
Jackson, Solon, Mary Elizabeth and Anna Miretta Vail, c. 1818
Mrs. R. W. Huse, Montpelier, Vt.



Fig. 6. A. G. D. Tuthill: Mary Elizabeth Vail, c. 1840
Mrs. R. W. Huse, Montpelier, Vt.



Fig. 7. A. G. D. Tuthill: Anna Miretta Vail, c. 1840
Mrs. R. W. Huse, Montpelier, Vt.



Fig. 8. A. G. D. Tuthill: Mrs. Melancthon Taylor Woolsey, c. 1817
M. Woolsey Campau, Grosse Pointe Park, Mich.

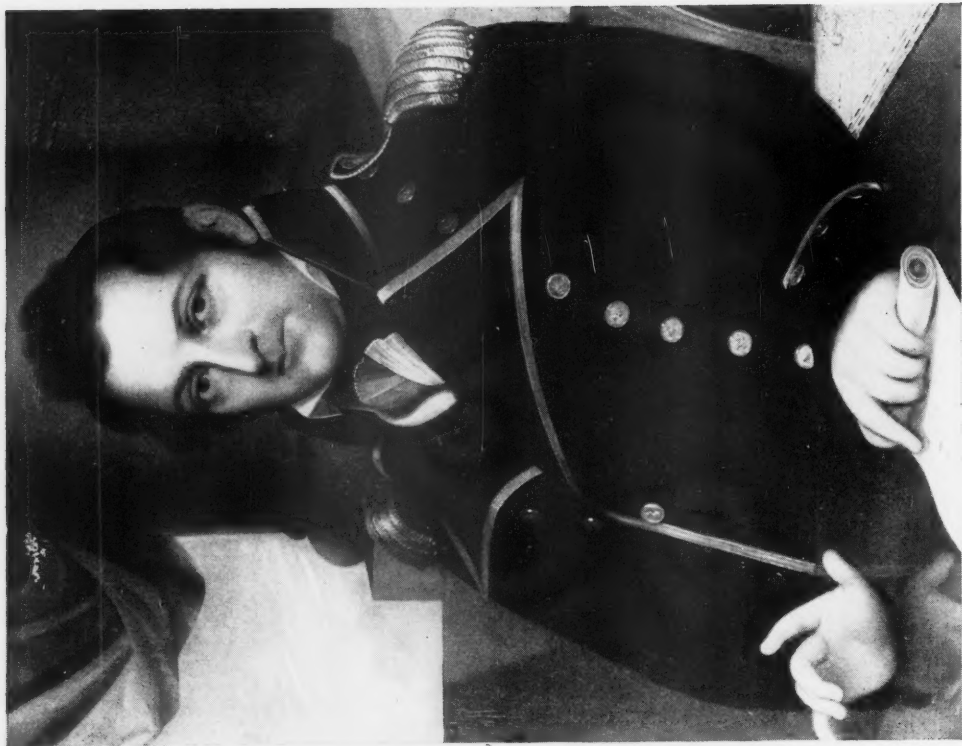


Fig. 9. A. G. D. Tuthill: Captain Melancthon Taylor Woolsey, c. 1817
M. Woolsey Campau, Grosse Pointe Park, Mich.

1930. Henry Hobart Vail, *Pomfret, Vermont*, page 358: "Meanwhile, young Ware had made the acquaintance of Abram Tuthill, a portrait painter of some note and son of John Tuthill, who was for a few years a resident in Pomfret. Abram Tuthill was born at Orient on Long Island, then called Oyster Ponds. Ware learned from Tuthill something of handling oil in painting, and this knowledge he gave to his more skilled friend Mason."

Several very brief but significant references to Tuthill may be lumped into a paragraph or two. The genealogical tables in Henry Hobart Vail's above-cited history of Pomfret show that both the Tuthill and Vail families originated at Oyster Ponds and that there was a good deal of inter-marriage between them at Pomfret. Two of Tuthill's sisters married Vails, and while there is no evidence that Tuthill himself did likewise — his wife's name is mentioned nowhere in the literature — the close connection between these families strongly suggests that the artist was born on Long Island and not in Vermont or in England.

Abraham G. D. Tuthill, portrait painter, is listed at 213 Water Street in the New York City Directory for 1808 and at 46 Chatham Street in the directory for 1810. There are no other listings for him; apparently Dunlap was two years off in his recollection of Tuthill's period of residence at the latter address. Tuthill is listed in the Buffalo City Directory continuously from 1837 to 1840.

Finally, to complete the literature, we should give the inscription on his tombstone in the graveyard at Montpelier, which is as noble in sentiment as it is innocent of punctuation. After recording that Abraham G. D. Tuthill died on June 12, 1843, at the age of 67, the headstone goes on to the following:

"He dies yet lives his wondrous art
Bids life from out the canvas start
To charm the soul to touch the heart
Genius can never die"

II

We have so far located 43 paintings by Abraham Tuthill, fourteen of them in one collection in Montpelier. These fourteen paintings belong to Mrs. R. W. Huse, a great-great-granddaughter of Mary Maria Tuthill Vail, the artist's sister, with whom he lived during the last years of his life. Most of them are family portraits, but there are two huge canvases, one historical and one religious, which seem to represent unsalable ideas. The remaining Tuthills are scattered from New York to San Francisco.

One or two of the 43 paintings are signed and only one is dated. All



Fig. 10. A. G. D. Tuthill: Mrs. Alida Livingston Woolsey, c. 1817
M. Woolsey Campau, Grosse Pointe Park, Mich.



Fig. 11. A. G. D. Tuthill: Mrs. Nathaniel Platt, 1820
Mme. Florian Furpillot, Washington, D. C.
 (Photograph courtesy Frick Art Reference Library)

43 are practically identical in style. Although Dunlap noted great improvement in Tuthill's manner in the interim between his two meetings with that artist, we cannot trace any arc of development in his work. To us he appears to be one of those painters whose careers are like a spinning top; there may be momentary aberrations of movement, but essentially the thing remains in one place and dies just where it began. In view of this fact, it is extremely curious that nearly all of Tuthill's known paintings can be assigned precise or approximate dates, so that a definite chronology for his known work can be outlined. The evidence is of various kinds, both external and internal; we give it in connection with those paintings of his which we reproduce.

The earliest, in all probability, are the two nearly identical portraits of Benjamin West (Fig. 1) and the immense, probably unfinished *Nativity*. The *Benjamin West*s seem to represent that artist at the age of 60 or thereabouts; this would bring them to 1798, when Tuthill was 22 years of age and was, presumably, studying with West in London. There is no reason to believe they were not painted from life, and it makes good sense for the pupil to have brought back portraits of the celebrated teacher if for no other reason than to serve as evidence of his having studied with him. The *Nativity* is, in all probability, a student effort executed in Europe. It is very crudely done, exhibits none of the eloquence of color which is the most distinctive feature of Tuthill's mature work, and deals with a subject altogether out of harmony with the atmosphere of small-town New England in which Tuthill spent so much of his life. And we have Sellstedt's word for it that he was not a religious man during a great part of his career. Certainly the late conversion to Presbyterianism mentioned by Sellstedt cannot account for so "popish" and Italianate a picture as this.

The *West*s and the *Nativity*, then, were probably produced before Tuthill's return to this country. There is no record of him here between his birth in 1776 and the New York City Directory entry of 1808. Of his New York pictures of 1808-10 we have found no trace. We pick up his trail again with Vermont portraits painted about 1815.

In the Huse collection in Montpelier is a painting which has been known for generations simply as *The Doctor* (Fig. 2). The sitter's identity has been forgotten, but most of the other Huse portraits represent members of Tuthill's own family, and according to the genealogical tables in Henry Hobart Vail's invaluable history of Pomfret, Abraham Tuthill's sister, Bethia, was the wife of Dr. Thomas Vail. The portrait is of a gray-haired man between 50 and 60 years old. Dr. Thomas Vail was born in 1760, and if this is a

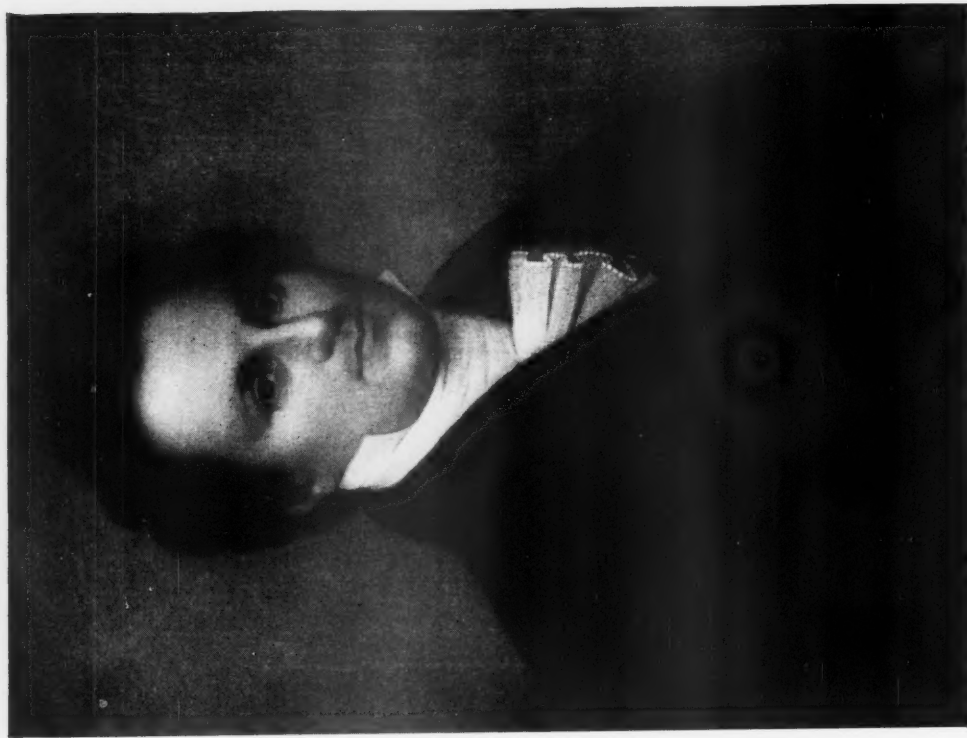


Fig. 12. A. G. D. Tuthill: Colonel George Larned, c. 1825
Alpheus W. Chittenden, Colorado Springs



Fig. 13. A. G. D. Tuthill: General Lewis Cass, c. 1817
Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library

portrait of him, it must have been executed in the general neighborhood of 1815.

Tuthill's portraits of the Montpelier newspaper publisher, General Ezekiel Walton, and his wife (Figs. 3 and 4) were certainly not painted before the sitters were married, and, to judge from their apparent age, could not have been done long after that event. Now, the Waltons had a daughter, Mrs. Halsey Wing, who was painted by Benjamin Franklin Mason in 1832 (see Fig. 6 among the Masons reproduced herewith) and could not have been a day over 20 at the time. It is obvious, therefore, that Tuthill's Walton portraits were probably done in 1812 or a little later.

Estimating the ages of adults from their painted portraits is, to be sure, an extremely risky business, but there is much less risk involved in estimating the ages of small children. The group portrait of Jackson, Solon, Mary Elizabeth and Anna Miretta Vail (Fig. 5), the offspring of Tuthill's sister, Mary Maria, and her husband, Joshua Youngs Vail, can be dated very close to 1818, for Mary Elizabeth, who is clearly an infant less than two, was born in 1817. Three of these same children were painted by Tuthill as young adults some fifteen to twenty years later; we reproduce two of these portraits (Figs. 6 and 7).

The portraits of Melancthon Taylor Woolsey, his wife and his mother (Figs. 8, 9 and 10) could have been executed only between 1817 and 1825, and probably earlier in that period rather than later. According to the *Dictionary of American Biography*, Woolsey was married in 1817; he is shown by Tuthill in the uniform of a Navy captain, a rank he held from 1816 to 1833; and according to family tradition, the pictures were painted at Sackets Harbor, New York, where Woolsey was stationed between 1812 and 1825.

Tuthill's only dated painting is a portrait of Mrs. Nathaniel Platt of Plattsburg, New York, done in 1820 (Fig. 11). It is likely that Dunlap ran across Tuthill for the second time in this town rather than in Utica, for Dunlap himself was in Plattsburg in 1819-20 and at that time he painted portraits of other members of the Platt family which are still preserved there. Unfortunately, there is a long hiatus in Dunlap's otherwise voluminous diary at just this point, and there is no detailed record of what he did in Plattsburg or of the people he met there. One wonders if the rather skeptical, not to say derisive treatment which Dunlap accords Tuthill in his history might have arisen from competition between these two artists for the portrait business of Plattsburg. At all events, there is no trace of Tuthill in Utica.



Fig. 14. A. G. D. Tuthill: Sylvester, Julia, Jane and Catherine Larned, c. 1825
Alpheus W. Chittenden, Colorado Springs

Tuthill first went to Buffalo in 1822. Three years later, as is shown by the newspaper references given above, he was in Detroit, and at this time probably painted his portrait of Lewis Cass, governor of Michigan Territory (Fig. 13). The portraits of the Larned family of Detroit (Figs. 12 and 14) seem to have been done at this period as well, and it is obvious that the immense painting of De Witt Clinton presiding at the ceremonies connected with the opening of the Erie Canal must also have been made in 1825, since this is the year the canal was inaugurated. To the middle '20's also belong the portraits of the Reed brothers of Montpelier (Figs. 15 and 16); twenty years later B. F. Mason was to paint Hezekiah Reed's wife.

Sellstedt to the contrary notwithstanding, two of Tuthill's portraits of Buffalo mayors still exist. If Sellstedt can be believed, they must have been painted during their sitters' terms of office. Hiram Pratt (Fig. 17) served as mayor of Buffalo in 1835 and again in 1839; Ebenezer Walden held that position in 1838. And we know from the City Directory that Tuthill lived in Buffalo from 1837 to 1840.

Last of all we reproduce the extremely curious self-portrait of Tuthill (Fig. 18) in the Huse collection, which is obviously a work of his last years.

III

That Tuthill was not a great artist is perfectly obvious. His powers of characterization were slight; he had little of the sympathy with people and the understanding of different human types that distinguishes the work of his pupil, Mason, although his portraits of children are more real and appealing than Mason's. He never mastered human anatomy, but he has none of the stark, primitive drama that distinguishes a painter like William Jennys. He was content to repeat a few formulas and mannerisms through his entire career. Nearly all his men are seen from the left and nearly all his women from the right. Whenever he paints a hand which is not grasping something, the forefinger is extended or separated from the others; and all his fingers turn up at their tips. (These affectations in painting hands probably reflect Tuthill's brief period of study in Paris. At all events they are very common in the works of Ingres and his school.) Over and over again he uses the same pair of white puffballs to indicate a necktie, and his lace ruffs are invariably indicated with identical parallel strokes edged with a kind of white beading.



Fig. 15. A. G. D. Tuthill: Hezekiah Hutchins Reed, c. 1825
Miss Cora May, San Francisco, Cal.



Fig. 16. A. G. D. Tuthill: Thomas Reed, c. 1825
John Walden, Cambridge, Mass.

Tuthill's virtues become most readily apparent when one compares his work to that of Dunlap, the only contemporary critic who seems to have noticed him. Dunlap's painting is like a comedy for puppets, full of lively little scurrying figures which are more or less well differentiated and amusing, but are altogether insubstantial. Tuthill, on the other hand, is like a display of archaic sculpture — solid, without movement, thickly articulated, monumental, strong. For all the "smooth and well-varnished" effect of his surfaces noted by Dunlap, the core of his painting is stone-hard.

But Tuthill has his subtleties, too. He was probably the most gifted colorist among all the American itinerants of his time. The rose and oyster white in the portrait of his wife, the grandly Italianate reds and greens which he uses many times, the rich maroons and blues of the Woolsey portraits, the delicately modulated grays and blacks of Mrs. Platt — all this is something highly exceptional for a small-town American artist of the 19th century. It indicates that Tuthill really did learn much in Europe, but without sacrificing the tough fiber of the provincial America to which he belonged, and which today is being reappraised with increasing and well deserved respect.

The following is a complete list of the Tuthills known to us:

- c. 1798: Benjamin West. (Montpelier, Vt.: Mrs. R. W. Huse.)
- c. 1798: Benjamin West. (New York, N. Y.: Mrs. Stewart Beach.)
- c. 1798: The Nativity. (Montpelier, Vt.: Mrs. R. W. Huse.)
- c. 1815: "The Doctor." (Dr. Thomas Vail?) (Montpelier, Vt.: Mrs. R. W. Huse.)
- c. 1815: General Ezekiel Walton. (Berkeley, Cal.: Mrs. Angela Wing Roth.)
- c. 1815: Mrs. Ezekiel Walton. (Berkeley, Cal.: Mrs. Angela Wing Roth.)
- c. 1815: Joshua Youngs Vail. (Swanton, Vt.: Mrs. Harold Bliss.)
- c. 1815: Mrs. Joshua Youngs Vail. (Swanton, Vt.: Mrs. Harold Bliss.)
- c. 1815: James Hooker Langdon and Son George. (Bernardsville, N. J.: J. Langdon Schroeder.)
- c. 1815: Mrs. James Hooker Langdon and Son James. (Bernardsville, N. J.: J. Langdon Schroeder.)
- c. 1817: Melancthon Taylor Woolsey. (Grosse Pointe Park, Mich.: M. Woolsey Campau.)
- c. 1817: Mrs. Melancthon Taylor Woolsey. (Grosse Pointe Park, Mich.: M. Woolsey Campau.)
- c. 1817: Alida Livingston Woolsey. (Grosse Pointe Park, Mich.: M. Woolsey Campau.)
- c. 1818: Jackson, Solon, Mary Elizabeth and Anna Miretta Vail. (Montpelier, Vt.: Mrs. R. W. Huse.)
- 1820: Mrs. Nathaniel Platt. Signed and dated, "Tuttle, 1820." (Washington, D. C.: Mme. Florian Vurpillot.)
- c. 1822: Joseph Ellicott. (Buffalo, N. Y.: Buffalo Historical Society.)
- c. 1822: Benjamin Ellicott. (Buffalo, N. Y.: Mrs. G. Reynolds Stearns.)



Fig. 17. A. G. D. Tuthill: Hiram Pratt, c. 1839
City Hall, Buffalo



Fig. 18. A. G. D. Tuthill: Self-Portrait, c. 1840
Mrs. R. W. Huse, Montpelier, Vt.

- c. 1822: William Peacock. (Buffalo, N. Y.: Mrs. G. Reynolds Stearns.)
- c. 1822: Oliver Forward. (Buffalo, N. Y.: Buffalo Historical Society.)
- c. 1822: Mrs. Oliver Forward. (Buffalo, N. Y.: Buffalo Historical Society.)
- c. 1823: Laura Vail. (Montpelier, Vt.: Mrs. Carroll Booth.)
- c. 1825: Hezekiah Reed. (San Francisco, Cal.: Miss Cora May.)
- c. 1825: Thomas Reed. (Cambridge, Mass.: John R. Walden.)
- c. 1825: De Witt Clinton. (Portrait head.) (Montpelier, Vt.: Mrs. R. W. Huse.)
- c. 1825: De Witt Clinton Opening the Erie Canal. (Montpelier, Vt.: Mrs. R. W. Huse.)
- c. 1825: General Lewis Cass. (Detroit, Mich.: Burton Historical Collection, Detroit Public Library.)
- c. 1825: Col. George Larned. (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Alpheus W. Chittenden.)
- c. 1825: Sylvester, Julia, Jane and Catherine Larned. Signed, not dated. (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Alpheus W. Chittenden.)
- c. 1826: Self Portrait. (Woodstock, Vt.: Solon Vail.)
- c. 1826: Adriel Ely. (Barrington, R. I.: Mrs. Katrina Murray.)
- c. 1826: Mrs. Adriel Ely. (New York, N. Y.: Mrs. William G. Thayer Shedd.)
- c. 1838: Ebenezer Walden. (Buffalo, N. Y.: Buffalo Historical Society.)
- c. 1838: Bela Coe. (Buffalo, N. Y.: Buffalo Historical Society.)
- c. 1839: Hiram Pratt. (Buffalo, N. Y.: Buffalo Historical Society.)
- c. 1840: Mary Elizabeth Vail. (Montpelier, Vt.: Mrs. R. W. Huse.)
- c. 1840: Anna Miretta Vail. (Montpelier, Vt.: Mrs. R. W. Huse.)
- c. 1840: Jackson Vail. (Montpelier, Vt.: Mrs. R. W. Huse.)
- c. 1840: Self Portrait. (Montpelier, Vt.: Mrs. R. W. Huse.)

We make no attempt to date the following:

- George Washington. (Montpelier, Vt.: Mrs. R. W. Huse.)
- Mrs. Abraham G. D. Tuthill. (Montpelier, Vt.: Mrs. R. W. Huse.)
- Mrs. Thomas Cotton Chittenden. (Colorado Springs, Colo.: Alpheus W. Chittenden.)

We have also been informed of two Tuthill portraits of children in the possession of the Deming family of Wellesley Hills, Mass., but have been unable to see them. Alpheus Chittenden has photographs of lost Tuthill portraits of General and Mrs. Charles Larned.

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